

that the seemingly infinite ocean of air that surrounds this planet has decidedly finite capacities for diluting and dispersing the wastes we throw up from our civilization. In our singleminded devotion to achieving the benefits of science and technology, we plunged ahead with the abundant materials at hand, without a very precise notion of where we were going and without serious attention to the possible side effects of our activities on the environment.

Today it is important that we can no longer with impunity discharge wastes indiscriminately to the environment. It is apparent today that we must use our science and technology to control the by-product problems of our industrialized society as well as to produce the goods and services we all increasingly enjoy. And it is apparent that we are going to have to run very hard in the immediate years ahead just to keep pace with the problem. We must greatly expand our application of technology to the sources of pollution, and we must accelerate our efforts to further develop that technology. I am convinced, Mr. Chairman, that the attention focused on these needs by this Committee will make a substantial contribution to our progress toward the control of environmental pollution.

We don't have much time and I regret, Mr. Gilbertson, that we did not get to you sooner. We still have 10 to 15 minutes. Please go into your report.

Mr. GILBERTSON. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman, I'll be very glad to.

STATEMENT BY WESLEY E. GILBERTSON, CHIEF, OFFICE OF SOLID WASTES, PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Mr. GILBERTSON. In the interest of time, I will submit my statement for the record and then touch on a few highlights of it. This is a sort of status report on the adequacy of technology for solid waste pollution abatement. I think that I could say without fear of overstatement that few problems of the environment need more work in the field of technology than does the solid waste area. It is, however, encouraging that the Federal Government has underway a national program to advance the technology of solid waste management under the Solid Waste Disposal Act which was adopted by the Congress last October.

The thrust of this legislation is basically a research, technical development, demonstration, and planning authorization for purposes of preventing and solving solid waste problems which contribute to health hazards, scenic blight, and environmental decay, through the application of technology—which I will touch on—with reference to garbage, to trash, junk, and other solid wastes from municipalities, from industry, and from agriculture.

It would be safe to say that the solid waste problem has reached major proportions during many years of public indifference and professional neglect. This is true even though large sums of money are spent by public agencies and by private citizens and industries on disposal costs. They are paying for this, we are all paying for it, without really getting done the job that we would like to have done. The history of the solid waste problem, which might be called the third side of the pollution problem, is somewhat in contrast, I think, with what has happened in the other areas of environmental contamination and pollution almost down then to the present time. As a matter of fact, up until about a year ago the total Federal expenditures in this field were about \$250,000 a year for R. & D. So as a